

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 7-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and claims 2-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103. In response claims 1 and 9-11 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced by way of any of the amendments or additions thereof. Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections should be withdrawn for at least the reasons set forth below.

In the Office Action, claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 or § 103 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,926,179 ("*Matsuda*"). More specifically, claims 1 and 7-11 are rejected as allegedly anticipated by *Matsuda*, and claims 2-6 are rejected as allegedly obvious in view of *Matsuda*. Applicants believe that the anticipation and obviousness rejections are improper for at least those reasons as discussed below.

With respect to the anticipation rejection, claims 1, 9, 10 and 11 are the sole independent claims. Claim 1 recites a virtual space system that has a chat function. The virtual space system includes a virtual space control device including a transmission object holding means for holding the latest position information of a transmitter in a virtual space and transmission region definition information for defining a transmission region as a closed region at a side of the transmitter. The virtual space control device further includes a reception object holding means for holding the latest position information of a reception object and a reception region definition information for defining a reception region as a closed region at a side of the reception object. The virtual space system as defined in claim 1 at least further includes at least one chat storage file for storing only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter in the reception region or only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter when the reception object enters the transmission region.

Claim 9 recites a virtual space control device for controlling a virtual space that has a chat function. The virtual space control device at least includes a transmission object holding means and a reception object holding means wherein only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter in the reception region or only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter when the reception object enters the transmission region are stored in at least one chat storage file.

Claim 10 recites a control method of a virtual space that has a chat function. The controlled method includes holding the latest position information of a transmitter in the virtual space and transmission region definition information for defining a transmission region as a

closed region at a side of the transmitter; holding the latest position information of a reception object and reception region definition information for defining a reception region as a closed region at a side of the reception object; and storing in at least one chat storage file only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter and the reception region or only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter when the reception object enters the transmission region.

Claim 11 recites an information providing medium for providing a program which causes a computer to execute functions including holding the latest position information of a transmitter in a virtual space and transmission region definition information for defining a transmission region as a closed region at a side of the transmitter; holding the latest position information of a reception object and reception region definition information for defining a reception region as a closed region at a side of the reception object; and storing in at least one chat storage file only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter in the reception region or only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter when the reception object enters the transmission region.

As previously discussed, independent claims 1 and 9-11 have been amended. As amended, these claims further recite, in part, a chat storage file for storing only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter in the reception region or only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter when the reception object enters the transmission region. The amendments as discussed above are supported in the specification, for example, on page 7.

In contrast, Applicants believe that *Matsuda* is distinguishable from the claimed invention. For example, *Matsuda* fails to disclose or suggest the chat storage file of independent claims 1 and 9-11. The private chat windows in Figures 34-39 of *Matsuda* are not chat storage files. Indeed, the private chat window is a window separate from the area for the public chat displayed in the multi-user window that makes the user recognize that a one-to-one private chat is to be performed. See, *Matsuda*, column 31, lines 30-35. Clearly, this fails to disclose or suggest the chat storage files as claimed and moreover, the remaining portions of *Matsuda* are deficient with respect to the chat storage files as well.

With respect to the rejection of claims 2-8, these claims each depend from independent claim 1. For substantially the same reasons as discussed above, Applicants believe that *Matsuda* is distinguishable from the claimed invention as defined by claims 2-8.

Based on at least these reasons, Applicants believe that *Matsuda* fails to disclose or suggest the claimed invention. Therefore, Applicants believe that *Matsuda* fails to anticipate or render obvious the claimed invention.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the anticipation and obviousness rejections be withdrawn.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and earnestly solicit reconsideration of same.

Respectfully submitted,

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